

# NATO Approves Lemnitzer, He Visits Kennedy

By David Wise  
By a Staff Correspondent

WASHINGTON.

Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer called on a "highly gratified" President Kennedy at the White last night several hours after the NATO Council in Paris had approved his selection as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

The White House visit by Gen. Lemnitzer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the President's statement praising him evidently were designed to squelch speculation here and in Europe that the new NATO commander might not enjoy Mr. Kennedy's full backing.

The 15-member NATO Council approved Gen. Lemnitzer's selection, as expected, a few hours after French President Charles de Gaulle and his cabinet cleared the way by agreeing to Mr. Kennedy's nomination of him to succeed Gen. Lauris Norstad, who is retiring.

Gen. Lemnitzer entered the President's office at 8:55 p. m. with Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, who will succeed him as chairman of the Joint Chiefs; the nation's flag, uniformed officers and Gen. Lemnitzer. Shortly thereafter, however, President Kennedy and Gen. Lemnitzer reportedly were working closely together. The President is said to have expressed satisfaction, for example, in Gen. Lemnitzer's role in shoring up South Viet Nam against Communist aggression.

Popular in Britain

Gen. Lemnitzer's appointment was said to have been agreed with British officials. Britain's Prime Minister Macmillan, who has the general's group, as well as here, Gen. Lemnitzer has established a reputation as a good military diplomat, if not the most colorful general in the Army.

Those who are familiar with the reasons behind the shifts in the top echelon of the nation's military brass said that reports of friction were applied to Gen. Decker less than to Gen. Decker. Gen. Decker is reported to be as Army Chief

of Staff. He and President Kennedy did not mesh well.

Lt Gen. Earle G. (Buzz) Wheeler, now deputy commander of U. S. forces in Europe, will replace Gen. Decker as part of the reshuffle announced by the President Friday.

French Cleared Way

Despite Mr. Kennedy's demonstration of support for Gen. Lemnitzer, the fact does remain that he will be the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs to serve less than two terms. Gen. Lemnitzer's first two-year term runs out about the time he takes over as NATO commander Nov. 1.

Gen. Lemnitzer was approved by the NATO Council as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe after the French government had cleared the way by approving his appointment during a 2 hour 40 minute cabinet meeting. On Saturday, Gen. de Gaulle made it clear that he was not to be hurried into approving the appointment. He announced that the matter would be considered at a Cabinet meeting, thus slowing up approval of Gen. Lemnitzer.

Gen. Wheeler is considered the likely candidate to succeed Gen. Lemnitzer in about two years. There were reports that President Kennedy had proposed Gen. Wheeler as NATO commander, but that Alliance members should not go to the aid of lower rank than Gen. Decker.

Earlier in the day, the President sent to the Senate the nomination of Gen. Taylor to succeed Gen. Decker as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His term beginning Nov. 1. At the same time, he nominated Gen. Wheeler for a three-year term as Army Chief of Staff. The House said no approval was needed for Gen. Wheeler's appointment.